



## **Motor Vehicle Policy**

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### **1.0 Policy/Procedure**

Employees will be responsible for ensuring safe operation, maintenance, and when required, inspection of the vehicle as detailed in this policy. Employees must not operate an unsafe vehicle or operate a vehicle in an unsafe manner.

### **2.0 DEFINITIONS:**

**County Vehicles:** includes County owned vehicles, County leased vehicles, and personal vehicles used for County business.

### **3.0 PROCEDURES**

#### **Drivers Training**

Each new employee or new driver should be given "initial" training at the outset to get the employee properly indoctrinated before operating a vehicle. A briefing by the employee's supervisor which covers the following items is suggested:

Employees driving a County vehicle or their own vehicle for County business must take defensive driving bi-annually.

Any employee involved in a motor vehicle accident that is deemed avoidable will be required to complete a driver's training computer module within a week of the accident. The training will be administered by the Human Resources Department.

#### **Drivers License Requirements**

No employee shall operate a County vehicle unless they possess and can present a valid North Carolina drivers license. If an employee is required to drive County vehicles for County business and has had driving privileges suspended or license revoked, the employee must report this condition to his supervisor immediately.

Depending upon the nature of an employee's job duties, a loss of driver's licenses may result in a transfer to another position or termination of employment.

## Commercial Drivers License (CDL)

Commercial Drivers License is required and must be current for every County employee who operates a motor vehicle designed or used to transport passengers or property in the following instances:

- If the vehicle has a gross weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds.
- If the vehicle is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, or
- If the vehicle is transporting hazardous materials and is required to display a placard in accordance with the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act (49CFR Part 172, Subpart F).

A special endorsement on a CDL also is required in order to haul hazardous materials and transport passengers. Additional information on CDLs is in the North Carolina Commercial Drivers Manual.

Employees who are required to maintain a CDL and employees who are heavy equipment operators are subject to Random Drug and Alcohol Testing.

## Vehicle Operations

- Vehicle operators are responsible for knowledge of and compliance with all State and local laws and ordinances governing the use and operation of motor vehicles.
- Before each trip and before starting a vehicle the driver shall make sure the vehicle is in safe operating condition and shall check all lights, horn, windshield wipers and washer, brakes, tires, fuel gauge, rearview mirrors, seat belts, and windows for clear visibility.
- Drivers are responsible for promptly reporting vehicle defects and maintenance needs in writing to their supervisor and/or vehicle manager. No employee is to operate a vehicle that the employee knows or has reason to suspect is not in safe operating condition. **Vehicles with safety deficiencies are to be immediately removed from service for repair.**

## Cell Phones and Other Hand Held Communication Devices

- All employees who drive while conducting County business of any sort **(with the exception of emergency responders performing an emergency call)** are required to safely pull off the road to talk or text on a cell phone, talk on a County radio or other communication device. It is the ultimate responsibility of each individual driver to comply with this policy. It is also recommended that all vehicle occupants ensure that drivers comply with this policy.

## Tobacco Use in County Vehicles

- Smoking, dipping, chewing or any other use of tobacco products are not allowed in County vehicles.

## **Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs**

- Any person found to be operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and possibly including immediate discharge.
- Anyone who is using or intends to use prescription or over the counter drugs that may impair driving ability (as stated on the product label) will report this situation to their supervisor. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

## **Vehicle Parking**

- Avoid high risk parking areas. Seek well-lighted areas. Always set parking brake when parking. Remove keys and lock parked vehicle. Do not leave a parked vehicle running when not attended.
- When not in use, all County vehicles shall be parked in areas designated for employee parking or areas designated for County owned vehicle parking.
- Whenever possible, position vehicle so that backing will not be necessary. If a vehicle must be backed, it is the driver's responsibility to:
  - Visually check the area behind the vehicle immediately prior to backing.
  - Whenever possible, request another employee to check the area in back of the vehicle and act as a signal person. This person shall remain in full view of the driver during the backing operation and clear of the vehicle and other obstructions.

## **Safety Belts**

Seat belts and shoulder harnesses shall be worn by drivers and passengers in County vehicles whenever the vehicle is in motion on public or private thoroughfares and roads.

## **Riders and Passengers**

No unauthorized riders are allowed in or on County vehicles. Seats will not be overcrowded beyond the capacity of the available seat belts.

Under no circumstances are persons allowed to ride in the back of trucks.

## **Responding to Emergencies**

During emergencies, no job is so important that it requires you to operate a vehicle in a manner that is considered unlawful or unsafe. Although it is important when responding to an emergency call to get to the scene as soon as possible, it is your responsibility to drive safely and arrive safely. **An emergency call does not permit you to disregard traffic laws and regulations.**

## **Entering and Exiting Vehicles**

When entering and exiting a vehicle it is important to ensure that you have secure footing and have a hand on a solid object to prevent loss of balance and to prevent falls. When closing trunks, windows, and doors be sure that hands and other objects are clear.

## **Accidents**

Any accident, involving a County vehicle, **regardless of the extent of the damage**, is to be investigated by a police officer with jurisdiction in the area. All accidents must also be reported immediately to your supervisor and the Risk Management Specialist.

**Note:** Employees must abide by this policy and the vehicle usage policy (B-5) of the General Employment Section of the County of Lee Personnel Policy.